Sk!lls
NOVA SCOTIA

Skills Nova Scotia
Framework and 2002–2003 Action Plan

Strong Workforce • Bright Future

NOVA SCOTIA

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Message from the Premier

Office of the Premier

Skills Nova Scotia is about preparing Nova Scotia's workforce to meet the challenges of today, and the promise of tomorrow.

The Skills Nova Scotia Framework will prepare us to meet emerging skill needs. Through innovative solutions and recognizing business, labour, industry, and education groups as strategic partners, we can be successful.

We face challenges that include balancing economic growth with an aging workforce, but we also see opportunities. The government is committed to fostering a climate that will allow for sustained economic growth and job creation.

Skills Nova Scotia is a high priority for our government. The Skills Nova Scotia Framework was prepared in consultation with our strategic partners, and members of our workforce. The 2002–2003 Action Plan is the government's co-ordinated approach to ensure that Nova Scotians have access to learning throughout their lives.

We are committed to making Skills Nova Scotia successful to create a strong workforce and bright future for Nova Scotians and to leave a legacy for our youth, the workforce of tomorrow.

Sincerely,

John Hamm

John F. Hamm
Premier of Nova Scotia

Message from the Minister of Education

Office of the Minister of Education

The Department of Education proudly leads the province's Skills Nova Scotia efforts and initiatives. The *Skills Nova Scotia Framework and 2002–2003 Action Plan* details our commitment to further education and training opportunities for Nova Scotians through partnerships with business, labour, industry, communities, education, and training institutions.

Recently, we announced our plan to improve the quality of education in Nova Scotia. It's called *Learning for Life* and it addresses the fundamental needs of our education system. The plan includes smaller class sizes in the early years, more support for students with special needs, and putting more resources in the classroom.

Skills Nova Scotia complements and supports this plan. It's about building a strong workforce and a bright future. Through the new Skills and Learning Branch within the Department of Education, the Skills Nova Scotia efforts and initiatives will determine where employment opportunities exist, and prepare Nova Scotians of all ages through education and training, to be successful as employees and employers.

Next spring, we will present a *Report on Skills* that will highlight the actions the province has taken to maintain and develop education, training, and employment opportunities here at home.

We are committed to working with our partners to put good ideas to work. This is an investment in people and our economic future.

Sincerely,

Jane Purves
Minister of Education

Introduction

Nova Scotia is a leader in job creation and gross domestic product (GDP) growth in the country, and our future outlook is positive. Managing this growth is a challenge for business, labour, communities, individuals, and the government. A promising energy sector, an aging workforce, advancing technology, and globalization, have created a push to develop and deliver a skill development framework that responds to the changing economy and positions the province to take full advantage of existing and future opportunities.

An effective skill development framework consists of the activities and services that meet the demand for a variety of skills and knowledge, as well as the ability to supply them when needed. Because employment growth is important to the economic and social development of the province, the elements of the labour market and the extent to which they work well together are critical. By working together, we can make better use of programs and services we have now, create strategic partnerships to respond to opportunities that present themselves and find innovative solutions to create a world-class workforce ready to meet the demands of today and the promise of tomorrow.

The Skills Nova Scotia Framework addresses feedback from a number of consultations and, in response, identifies goals and objectives, and provides a plan for action. The framework is intended to encompass skills and learning from the ABCs to PhDs and is, in effect, a catalyst, designed to encourage the development of a skilled, knowledgeable, and responsive labour force.

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Introduction

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What Skills Are and Why They Are Important

The skills, attributes, and knowledge required for most occupations in the 21st century are constantly evolving. New technology and process innovation in the workplace have changed the skills required for traditional occupations and led to the creation of new jobs. For instance, today's forestry and milling operations require individuals with a range of skills to perform everyday job tasks that comply with certification and regulatory standards. Doctors, teachers, and engineers are also seeing their workplaces transformed by information technology.

Skills and knowledge are important to all of us because ...

- Most new jobs require higher levels of knowledge and skills that change quickly. People must have the ability to continually develop their skills and knowledge.
- Higher levels of education and literacy levels are linked to longer-term employment, and higher per capita income.
- Better-educated people tend to be healthier, live longer, and are more likely to participate in civic and community affairs.

A skilled and knowledgeable labour force is important to the economy and society because ...

- Productivity growth is linked to an investment in skills, capital, research, and development.
- Skill development leads to lower costs, higher product reliability, more innovation, increased productivity, and more efficient product design cycles.
- Good education and foundational skills are essential to fully participate in a well-functioning 21st-century society.

Types of Skills[1]

For the purposes of this framework, we will define a skill as the ability to perform a task competently and an occupation as a combination of professional or technical skills and knowledge needed to perform a particular type of work. Borrowing from the federal Expert Panel on Skills, we will categorize skills as essential, technical, contextual, managerial, and leadership. Each set describes categories of skills that are important to the performance of any job.

Essential skills are reading text, document use, writing, mathematics, thinking skills, learning independently, adapting to situations, exercising responsibility, analysing and solving problems, oral communications, working with others, and computer use. They are considered foundational to formal education, work-based training, and workforce participation.

Technical skills (or professional skills) refer to the ability to perform specialized tasks that may be particular to a single occupation or industry or cross a range of industries.

Contextual skills refer to the ability to operate successfully in different settings, such as in different countries, different regions, or a culturally diverse workplace. Each organization and industry sector operates within its own context, and some may operate in several contexts. Each context requires different skill sets.

Managerial skills refer to the ability to undertake organizational activities such as planning, marketing, and evaluation. They also include the ability to manage people, capital, and budgets.

Leadership skills refer to the ability to motivate and assist others to achieve their full potential, to take risks, and to formulate and champion a vision.

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Why a Skills Framework Is Needed

Nova Scotia has many strengths to build upon in addition to its positive economic outlook:

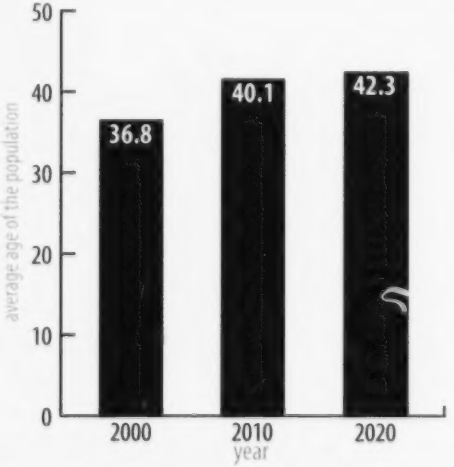
- Nova Scotia has a highly educated labour force.[2]
- Nova Scotia has a high participation rate in education and training.[3]
- Nova Scotia has the means to provide state-of-the-art education and training.[4]
- Nova Scotia offers a low cost of living.[5]
- Nova Scotia has a high quality of life.[6]

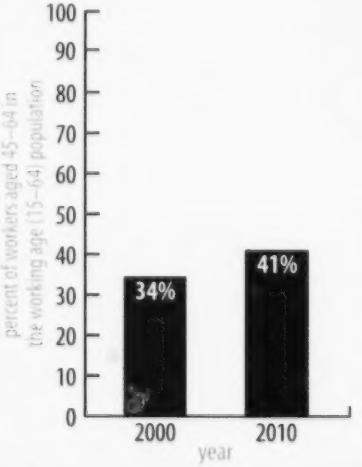
Despite the advantages noted above, a number of labour force and education challenges hinder the development of a well-balanced, skilled, and knowledgeable labour force.

Labour Force Challenges

- Nova Scotia's population is aging.

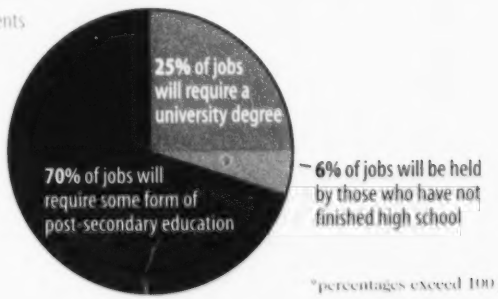
  Statistics Canada's medium term demographic projections show that the average age of the population will increase from about 36.8 in 2000, to 40.1 in 2010 and 42.3 in 2020. The share of older workers (aged 45–64) in the working age population (aged 15–64) will rise from about 34 percent in 2000 to 41 percent in 2010.[7]





- Most of Nova Scotia's future workforce is already in the labour market. In fact, more than half of Canada's 2015 workforce is already in the labour market.[8]
- There are already shortages of skilled labour that could pose challenges into the early part of the 21st century.[9]
- The federal Expert Panel on Skills indicated that "Canadian industry was most vulnerable to a shortage of individuals who combine management and essential skills and attributes with strong technical skills."[10]
- By 2011 immigration will account for all the net labour force growth in Canada.[11]
- Rural Nova Scotia faces skills challenges because of an aging population and out-migration.[12]
- The core of our economy is small, locally owned businesses which pose a challenge for training. Thirty-nine percent of Nova Scotians work in businesses with fewer than 20 employees.[13]
- The level of education required to work at most jobs is increasing.[14]

2004 projected education requirements for all new jobs in Canada*


25% of jobs will require a university degree
6% of jobs will be held by those who have not finished high school
70% of jobs will require some form of post-secondary education

*percentages exceed 100 percent due to rounding

The province is home to 11 universities, 2 community colleges with a total of 18 campuses/learning centres, and 53 private career colleges.

- Nova Scotia has the highest percentage of persons with disabilities.[15]

While we have a highly educated population, not all Nova Scotians possess the education or skill sets required to be successful in the labour force.

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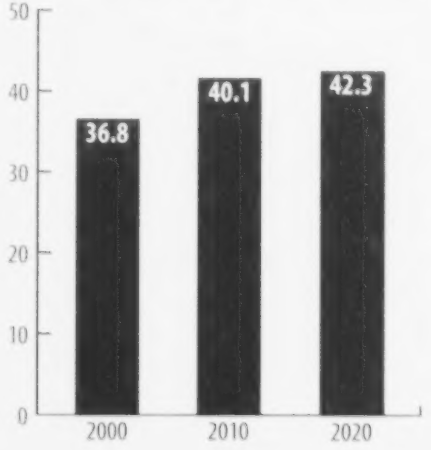

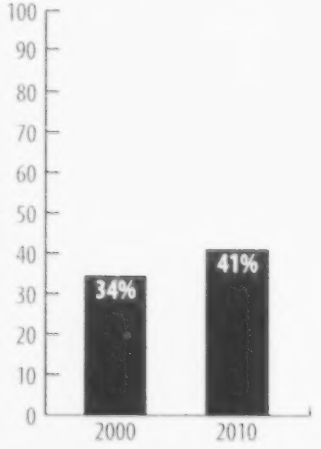

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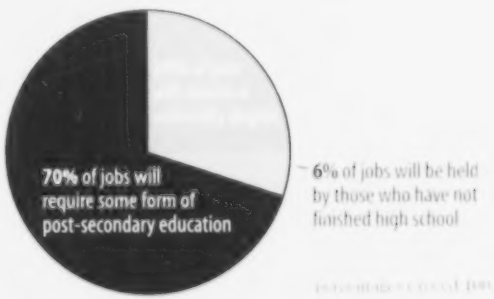
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Education Challenges

- A significant number of Nova Scotians do not possess a high school diploma. Approximately 22 percent of adult Nova Scotians (aged 25–54) have less than a high school diploma.[16]
- Many Nova Scotians have minimal literacy skills. Approximately 25 percent of Atlantic Canadians have great difficulty reading and have few of the essential literacy skills needed to understand and use written materials.[17]
- An additional 27 percent of Atlantic Canadians have limited literacy and numeracy skills. They can read, but not very well. They can deal with written materials only if they are written simply and clearly laid out, and they may also have trouble with many everyday reading and writing tasks.[18]
- Nova Scotia has an unusual distribution of those enrolled in post-secondary education. In 1998–99, 83 percent of students enrolled in post-secondary education were attending university, while only 17 percent were attending community college. In the country as a whole, 63 percent of post-secondary students were enrolled in university and 37 percent were enrolled in community college.[19]

Meeting the Challenges

Nova Scotia is working hard to meet the challenges leading to a well-balanced, skilled, and knowledgeable labour force.

Business is showing leadership.

For example, Dexter Construction (part of the Municipal Group) has partnered with the Nova Scotia Community College to create the Dexter Institute, an innovative program to address the skills shortage of human capital in heavy construction in Nova Scotia.

Adults are returning to learning.

For example, individuals are enrolling in the Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning, which supports the delivery of adult education from basic literacy to high school completion. Approximately 3,000 Nova Scotians are improving their skills and knowledge each year through programs offered by community-based organizations, school boards, the Nova Scotia Community College, and Collège de l'Acadie.

Government is partnering with business and labour.

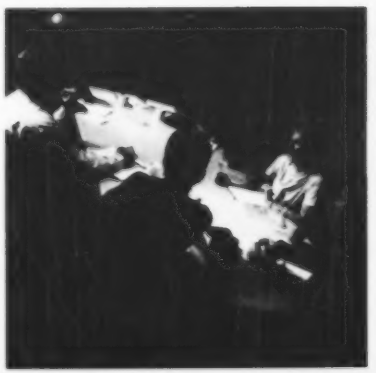
For example, the province is supporting the delivery of essential skills education programs to over 1,000 employees at over 40 businesses each year. The delivery of this initiative is done in partnership with business and labour.

Educational institutions are working with business.

For example, the Nova Scotia Community College is partnering with EnCana, Ocean Rig 2 AS, and Irving Oil to develop a new Offshore Operations Program to respond to the emerging labour market needs of Nova Scotia's offshore oil and gas industry.

Nova Scotia's universities are engaged in research projects supported by the Canadian Foundation for Innovation (CFI) that will train graduate students and expose undergraduate students to skills that are in high demand in industry (Acadia University, Dalhousie University, Mount Saint Vincent University, Nova Scotia Agricultural College, St. Francis Xavier University, Saint Mary's University, and the University College of Cape Breton).

Dalhousie University has created GINIus (Global Information Networking Institute University Services) to undertake collaborative and contracted-in research and development with industrial and public sector clients and partners. As a result of these working relationships, students gain a more relevant education and learn the skills most valued by employers. This initiative also has a strong entrepreneurial component and provides incubator space for student-formed companies.



Who We Talked To

A world-class workforce ready to meet the demands of today and the promise of tomorrow

Over the past few years, government has been working with partners to develop a framework that addresses the needs of Nova Scotians and the economy. In 2001, an internal Task Force on Skills was established to research and develop a "skills agenda." The resulting vision set out by the task force remains unchanged—a world-class workforce ready to meet the demands of today and the promise of tomorrow.

A number of other consultation sessions and reports point to the need for immediate strategic action in the area of skills and labour force development. The review of Nova Scotia's income assistance programs and the consultations associated with the economic growth strategy—*Opportunities for Prosperity*; *Nova Scotia's Energy Strategy: Seizing The Opportunity 2001*; the Voluntary Planning Consultations leading to *Taking Control of Our Future: the Final Report of Our Voluntary Planning's Fiscal Management Task Force*; the Premier's Forum on Skills; the review of the *Apprenticeship and Trades Qualifications Act*; and the Department of Education's Construction Initiative provided further basis for action.

Over the summer we requested feedback from business, labour, industry, community, and education stakeholders to confirm that the principles, goals, and objectives of the *Skills Nova Scotia Framework and 2002–2003 Action Plan* provide a solid foundation to meet the skill demands of a changing labour market. Stakeholders confirm that we are headed in the right direction.

What We Heard

Through all stakeholder consultations, Nova Scotians have made comments and recommendations about the importance of attaining and improving skills. The need for responsive support mechanisms and a lifelong education system that will enable Nova Scotians to participate actively at home, at work, and in the community was also highlighted.

We heard that improving the skills of Nova Scotians is critical to our economy and society.

- A lifelong learning approach to skill development is crucial to the long-term success of the province's economy.
- There are currently skill shortages in key sectors.
- Skill development initiatives must be flexible in order to benefit all partners.
- Training must lead to jobs.
- We must attract and retain skilled workers, retrain and improve the skills of existing workers, and have an appropriate immigration policy in place that attracts the right talent to Nova Scotia.
- Rural Nova Scotia's development is impeded by low education levels, shortage of qualified labour, and out-migration of youth.

We heard that a responsive support system is essential to the implementation of a skills framework.

- All partners are responsible and accountable for their roles and responsibilities in the development of a skills framework.
- Business and labour are willing to take more responsibility for training by increasing their involvement and investment.
- Government must assume a leadership role in the development and implementation of a skills framework.
- Labour market programs and services that support individuals must be available to all Nova Scotians, including those who are under-represented in the workforce, unemployed, or on income assistance.

- Relevant and timely labour market information is needed to assist skills partners in planning and delivering effective programs that lead to a more dynamic and responsive system.
- Nova Scotia needs to systematically collect and disseminate information about labour force skill requirements and education and training opportunities throughout the province.
- The benefits of trades and apprenticeship training must be marketed to create positive images among our male and female youth, their parents, and educators.
- Long-term planning policy and program development must be forward-looking and able to respond quickly to the challenges of the changing economy.
- Nova Scotia must ensure that all of its residents have the services and support they need to access education and training opportunities and succeed in our economy.
- Policies and processes must be introduced to ensure that immigrants already landed in Nova Scotia have opportunities for credential assessment and recognition that are accessible and transparent.
- Nova Scotians must appreciate that immigration is a key component to our future prosperity.

We heard that all components of our education system must strive for common goals.

- There must be more flexibility in the delivery of training to be more responsive to the needs of employers and individuals.
- Education and training should provide individuals with essential and technical skills and knowledge for work.
- The education system must provide children and youth with the skills and knowledge they need to make the transition into the workforce and their communities successfully.
- We need the right mix of university and college graduates to build a balanced workforce with the skills and knowledge to respond to labour market demands.

- Training and skill development initiatives must be in line with existing provincial and interprovincial recognized certifications so workers are able to access sustained employment rather than training for short-term jobs, requiring limited skill sets, that may not be recognized by other employers.
- Training capacity in the Apprenticeship Program must be increased, and it must be made more accessible to those who require skill upgrading and enhancement.
- Young people entering the labour market must be aware of career opportunities where employment opportunities exist and have the skills and training needed to match the opportunities.
- The Apprenticeship Program and other trades and technology programs must create a culture that attracts and retains women and members of under-represented groups.
- Training providers must ensure that participants are receiving credit toward certification and that training materials align with existing provincial training standards.
- Commercialization is a critical component of innovation, and this should be a focus of our post-secondary education institutions.

The reaction of government to challenges facing the province has been effective, efficient and far more aggressive than normal. We are quite pleased.

Peter O'Brien
Canadian Federation of Independent Business

Skills Nova Scotia Framework

The Skills Nova Scotia Framework provides the organizational structure to better co-ordinate skill development activities that support Nova Scotians preparing for, finding, and maintaining employment. The co-ordination of these activities will improve our capacity to create a responsive labour force prepared to deal with work in the changing economy.

Key Elements

In reviewing consultation documents and reports, six elements critical to the success of a skills framework were identified. They are full partnership, strategic co-ordination, capacity building, information, accountability, and inclusion.

Full Partnership

Full partnership among government, business, labour, educational institutions, communities, community-based organizations, and individuals is needed to optimize strategic investments in labour market development. Each of the partners has specific responsibilities.

Partnership implies specific responsibilities within the framework.

- Individuals must review and renew their own skills regularly to ensure their long-term employability.
- Business and labour must assess and articulate their needs effectively and maintain a strong commitment to investing in people.
- Education and training providers must understand how skill needs are changing and be responsive to the requirements of business, labour, and individuals.
- Government must ensure that resources are used to address priority skill needs and support participation in lifelong learning opportunities for Nova Scotians.
- Communities and community-based organizations must assist in the development and promotion of Skills Nova Scotia initiatives.

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Strategic Co-ordination

Provincial government resources must be co-ordinated and enhanced in order to develop a comprehensive approach to labour market development. The challenge is to co-ordinate the initiatives of key departments and agencies involved with labour market activity and to create a mechanism for collaborative decision making and action. With this collaboration, the province will be able to partner effectively with the federal government, business, labour, educational institutions, communities, and other stakeholders.

Capacity Building

Skill development and delivery mechanisms must be more flexible and responsive to the requirements of employers and learners.

Human and financial resources are required to address immediate and longer-term development and delivery needs through a targeted initiative approach. This approach is designed to address specific skill shortages by providing programs and services to support successful labour market attachment. Essential to the success of a targeted initiative approach is improved capacity of the existing education and training systems.

Information

The labour market and all its stakeholders are strengthened when decisions are based on timely and accurate information. Through knowledge sharing and relevant and responsive labour market policies, programs and services can be planned and implemented, leading to a balance between labour market supply and demand.

Accountability

Accountability can be achieved by assigning clear objectives and expected levels of performance, identifying the roles and responsibilities of each partner, balancing expectations with capacities, developing ways to measure our performance, and reporting regularly and clearly.

Inclusion

Every Nova Scotian should have access to opportunities that enable them to become actively involved in the labour market. The success of our efforts to grow the economy demands the participation of all stakeholders to ensure that Nova Scotians can benefit fully from a well-functioning economy.

Guiding Principles

The Skills Nova Scotia Framework will operate under the following principles:

- We will focus on developing a flexible and adaptive workforce.
- We recognize that learning occurs at home, at work, and in the community and that Nova Scotians value lifelong learning and training opportunities that encourage social and skill development.
- We all share responsibility in training, up-skilling, and re-skilling the workforce.
- We are sensitive to the needs of rural Nova Scotia and recognize that we are stronger when we build capacity in individuals and communities throughout the province.
- We will ensure a safe and healthy labour force through legislation, regulations, policies, and standards.
- We will ensure collective action and partnerships among government, business, labour, non-government organizations, learning institutions, individuals, and communities.
- We will ensure that Skills Nova Scotia is inclusive and accessible to all Nova Scotians, including immigrants, youth, women, African Nova Scotians, Aboriginal people, and persons with disabilities and/or low incomes.

Implementation Structure

Partners' Advisory Forum

The province currently benefits from a variety of consultative boards and committees that provide advice and leadership on a number of labour market programs and initiatives. A Skills Nova Scotia Partners' Forum will be created to provide advice and guidance on the development of the provincial labour force as a whole. The Partners' Forum will be composed of leaders from business, labour, education, training, and community organizations who understand the broad issues facing the Nova Scotia labour market and who are willing to take an advisory role.

The Partners' Forum will

- provide advice and guidance on the trends that are driving the Nova Scotian economy, and leadership in strategic action to ensure that the province has a skilled labour force to meet the challenges and opportunities
- ensure mechanisms are in place to co-ordinate communications among the range of labour market boards and agencies that provide advice and guidance to government on skills and related issues
- validate the Skills Nova Scotia annual *Action Plan* and *Report on Skills*

Deputy Ministers' Committee

A Deputy Ministers' Committee has been established to oversee implementation of the Skills Nova Scotia Framework. Chaired by the Deputy Minister of the Department of Education, the committee will include Deputy Ministers from Community Services, Environment and Labour, Energy, and Economic Development. The Deputies' Committee will meet semi-annually with the Partners' Forum.

Skills Nova Scotia–Labour Force Planning Committee

A Skills Nova Scotia–Labour Force Planning Committee has been established to ensure the Skills Nova Scotia Framework is implemented across government. Composed of senior officials from all departments and agencies who play an active role in labour force development, the Labour Force Planning Committee will implement an annual *Action Plan* and ensure strategic co-ordination of programs and services.

Skills and Learning Branch

The Skills and Learning Branch has been created within the Department of Education. The branch will consist of policy and program elements necessary to lead the province's efforts in skills and facilitate the ongoing development and implementation of the Skills Nova Scotia Framework.

The Branch includes

- Apprenticeship Training
- Provincial Apprenticeship Board
- Adult literacy and basic education
- Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning
- High School Graduation Diploma for Adults
- Essential skills programming in the workplace
- Workforce adjustment and attachment initiatives
- Labour market information research and analysis
- Labour market policy and research
- Targeted skills initiatives
- Federal/Provincial Relations–Labour Market Development Agreement (LMDA), Forum of Labour Market Ministers (FLMM), Skills Development Agreement
- Skills Nova Scotia marketing initiatives
- Immigration programs and services
- Youth Secretariat

Intergovernmental Relations

Nova Scotia cannot build a skilled and knowledgeable labour force on its own. All orders of government must share the commitment to work together and with other partners to ensure that all Nova Scotians can achieve their learning goals.

Federal–Provincial Relations

The federal government is an important partner in the development of a skilled and adaptable workforce. Through a variety of agreements and strategies, the province is working to ensure that national, regional, and provincial goals are achieved and that Nova Scotia plays an important role in the economic growth and prosperity of Canada. Efforts to develop a national skills agenda through an Innovations Strategy and the negotiation of a new Canada–Nova Scotia Labour Market Development Agreement offer two significant opportunities to work together.

The province will also work with its provincial and territorial counterparts to ensure existing tools maximize the Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST).

Innovations Strategy

In the 2001 Speech from the Throne, the federal government expressed its interest in developing a skills agenda. Since that time, the federal government released two consultation papers, *Achieving Excellence* and *Knowledge Matters*. Nova Scotia's response to the two documents will identify our priorities and reinforce our commitment to working with the federal government.

Canada–Nova Scotia Labour Market Development Agreement

The province has also indicated that it wishes to renegotiate its Labour Market Development Agreement (LMDA) to better meet the needs of Nova Scotians. The new agreement is fundamental to supporting the goals identified in the Skills Nova Scotia Framework and advancing the actions necessary to achieve our priorities.

!ntergovernmental

!nnovation

To succeed in the knowledge economy, Canada will need people with advanced skills and entrepreneurial spirit. Canada's youth are optomistic, technoligically savvy, globally connected, and the most highly educated generation in our history.

Adrienne Clarkson
Governor General of Canada

Speech from the throne to open the 37th Parliament of Canada

Intergovernmental Relations

Nova Scotia cannot build a skilled and knowledgeable labour force on its own. All orders of government must share the commitment to work together and with other partners to ensure that all Nova Scotians can achieve their learning goals.

Federal–Provincial Relations

The federal government is an important partner in the development of a skilled and adaptable workforce. Through a variety of agreements and strategies, the province is working to ensure that national, regional, and provincial goals are achieved and that Nova Scotia plays an important role in the economic growth and prosperity of Canada. Efforts to develop a national skills agenda through an Innovations Strategy and the negotiation of a new Canada–Nova Scotia Labour Market Development Agreement offer two significant opportunities to work together.

The province will also work with its provincial and territorial counterparts to ensure existing tools maximize the Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST).

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Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST)

The most significant increment since 1995 was in September 2000 when the federal government added $23.4 billion (over five years) to the CHST transfer. This increment was based on the proviso that the money be dedicated strictly to health expenditures. Provincial and territorial ministers of finance have called upon the federal government to increase the CHST generally to the 1995 levels.

The federal government provides the following labour market programs and services:

- supporting post-secondary students through student financial assistance measures
- funding the Canada–Nova Scotia Agreement on Strategic Partnerships
- funding assistance to provinces to enhance labour force attachment for persons with disabilities (Employability Assistance for Persons with Disabilities, EAPD)
- supporting the education and training pursuits of Aboriginal people
- providing labour market information
- providing short-term work experience opportunities during the summer months for students and recent graduates
- administering programs to support temporary foreign workers and permanent skilled workers to enter the country
- encouraging industrial sector councils to assess and respond to sectoral skill requirements
- conducting research into a broad range of labour market issues and compiling "best practice" documents
- providing transfers through the CHST to support health, post-secondary education, and social services

Aboriginal Relations

On June 7, 2002 the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia, the provincial government, and the Government of Canada signed an Umbrella Agreement that reaffirms their long-standing relationship and commitment to work together in good faith to resolve issues of mutual concern. The agreement highlights three distinct elements of their relationship:

- formal negotiations to consider constitutionally protected rights and other related issues of Mi'kmaq in Nova Scotia
- renewal of the parties' commitment to the existing Mi'kmaq–Nova Scotia–Canada Tripartite Forum
- initiation of discussions regarding the requirement of governments to consult with the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia

An important element of the Umbrella Agreement will be to increase the sustainability and self-reliance capacity of Mi'kmaq communities. This will require an increased emphasis by all parties on Aboriginal skills and training.

The following are some key interests and considerations:

- The Government of Canada has primary responsibility for Aboriginal education and training. Nova Scotia calls on the federal government to meet its obligations by ensuring that there are comparable services for Aboriginal persons.
- The province has an interest in taking a more strategic approach to Aboriginal skill development through co-ordination with the federal government and Aboriginal communities regarding federal/First Nation labour market initiatives such as the Aboriginal Human Resource Development agreements and provincial skills and labour market development initiatives.
- Nova Scotia currently works collaboratively with the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia and the Government of Canada within the Tripartite Forum. This vehicle could be used to support further collaboration in the area of skill development.
- The province will continue to participate in the Federal/Provincial/Territorial/Aboriginal Forum on Aboriginal Participation in the economy and explore opportunities for Aboriginal skills and training development as one of the strategies to help increase Aboriginal participation in the economy.

- The Province of Nova Scotia, along with the Mi'kmaq and the Government of Canada, is entering into a multi-phased process with a focus on resolving treaty and related issues through negotiation. Although this process may or may not deal directly with skills and training, an inherent objective in the resolution of these issues will be an increased capacity for First Nations in Nova Scotia to participate economically.

Working Together

Nova Scotia has an interest in enhancing communication and linkages with the federal government and the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia on skills and training issues. To further this objective, during 2002–2003 the province will be initiating discussions on how we can build linkages with Mi'kmaq communities and the federal government to assist in addressing these priorities.

Municipal Relations

Municipal governments have an important role to play in the development of a thriving and prosperous Nova Scotia. Municipalities are working to grow existing businesses and attract new investment, which requires access to a skilled and flexible workforce. Through the framework, all orders of government will be encouraged to work together to advance common goals.

2002–2003 Action Plan

In order to achieve the province's vision for Skills Nova Scotia, three goals have been identified:

- meet the skill needs of Nova Scotia's labour market
- provide better labour market access and supports to Nova Scotians
- strengthen Nova Scotia's system of lifelong learning opportunities

What follows are the goals, objectives, highlighted activities, and new actions planned under the Skills Nova Scotia Framework. Each of the goals and objectives is supported by a rationale of what we have learned from the extensive skills related consultations and research we have undertaken.

Goal 1: Meet the skill needs of Nova Scotia's labour market

The capacity to respond to emerging skill needs will be the key component to Nova Scotia's competitiveness. The more adaptive, responsive, and flexible that our labour force and skills development practices become, the more competitive Nova Scotia's labour market will be.

Objective 1: Research, develop, and distribute high quality labour market information

The development and distribution of labour market information will provide the means by which Nova Scotians can make informed career decisions, government and industry can predict future skill demands, and education and training providers can respond to emerging labour market needs.

Highlights of Activities Underway

- co-ordinating our approach to the collection, analysis, and dissemination of labour market information to address the labour market information needs of individuals, business and labour, education and training institutions, and governments

- understanding the human and resource planning needs of Nova Scotia's health care system by partnering with the Health Care Human Resource Sector Council and the federal government
- updating and releasing the *2003 Nova Scotia Business Climate Index*, a key measure that shows Nova Scotia's business climate and compares it to other jurisdictions in Canada

New Actions

- research labour market issues and trends to support government labour market policy initiatives and the development of labour market programs and services for Nova Scotians
- identify new opportunities for women in emerging trades/technology occupations in conjunction with stakeholders such as the Construction Sector Council and Women in Trades and Technology, to develop a planning process for a co-ordinated strategy for the recruitment and retention of women in these occupations and trades

We support the comprehensive and dynamic approach articulated in the Skills framework—government and industry partnering to shape our future, to ensure we take full advantage of the opportunities ahead.

Carol MacCulloch
Construction Industry of Nova Scotia

Objective 2: Co-ordinate targeted initiatives that satisfy emerging skill needs

Building upon the success of past relationships, we will pursue innovative partnerships among employees, labour, government, and training partners to meet immediate skill needs.

Highlights of Activities Underway

- addressing the short- and long-term human resource issues in the construction industry through the Construction Trades Skills Initiative, which will ensure that Nova Scotia has the skilled workers required in the construction trades to meet the industry's current and future needs
- targeting older workers (aged 55–64) through the Older Worker Pilot Project Initiative, in partnership with the federal government, which is designed to reintegrate displaced older workers into sustainable employment or maintain employment of older workers threatened with displacement

- understanding the human and resource planning needs of Nova Scotia's health care system by partnering with the Health Care Human Resource Sector Council and the federal government
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- implementing Nova Scotia's Nursing Strategy, which includes initiatives to support ongoing education needs for practising nurses
- developing and implementing strategies for the culture sector, focussing on developing export sales opportunities for cultural products in design, new media, music and sound recording, production crafts, and publishing
- providing customized training for adult learners such as the Nova Scotia Agricultural College–Millbrook Aquaculture and Horticulture Program
- developing entrepreneurial skills in partnership with the federal government and community organizations
- identifying labour demands and training needs to ensure that Nova Scotians have the skills required to participate in the offshore energy sector as part of the benefit plans negotiated with industry partners

New Actions

- address the issues of industry human resource planning and skill development by partnering with sector councils and industry associations
- engage stakeholders in an Energy Sector Skills Forum as outlined in *Nova Scotia's Energy Strategy: Seizing The Opportunity 2001*
- develop and implement an effective human resource strategy to attract and retain financial specialists to meet emerging skill needs of the Nova Scotia Public Service

Objective 3: Work to enhance and improve the apprenticeship system in Nova Scotia

The availability of high-quality training and tradespeople are essential parts of a strategy to make Nova Scotia an attractive place for business to invest and to enable Nova Scotia's businesses to compete in domestic and world markets.

Highlights of Activities Underway

- reviewing the apprenticeship system and legislation through a consultative process involving numerous stakeholders including the human resource sector councils, Construction Association of Nova Scotia, Mainland Nova Scotia Building and Construction Trades Council, and Cape Breton Island Building and Construction Trades Council, leading to legislative revisions and system enhancements that are consistent with and reponsive to business, labour, and apprentices' needs
- initiating a planning process to
  - develop a five-year strategic plan for apprenticeship training delivery and program development in Nova Scotia
  - examine the advisory function of the Provincial Apprenticeship Board and its policies concerning trade advisory committees
  - investigate the sourcing and supply of resources in the development and delivery of apprenticeship programming
  - review the compulsory certification designation policy for the purpose of developing consistent application among the designated trades

New Actions

- work towards a credit recognition agreement between post-secondary institutions and the Apprenticeship Program
- pilot an Apprenticeship Essential Skills Initiative to identify an apprentice's essential skills needs and to develop individualized learning plans
- articulate the learning acquired through the Apprenticeship Training Program to be recognized for the purposes of the Nova Scotia High School Diploma for Adults

A growing skills shortage represents a key barrier for companies operating in Canada's important manufacturing sector. Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters supports this framework, which is as much about building the knowledge base of the workforce as it is about developing new products, processes and technologies.

Dick Smyth
Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters

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Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters

Objective 4: Improve mobility of skilled workers within Canada

Nova Scotia will encourage stronger efforts by both provincial and territorial governments and provincial and national regulatory bodies to meet compliance requirements of the Labour Mobility Chapter of the Agreement on Internal Trade.

Highlights of Activities Underway

- implementing the Labour Mobility Chapter of the Agreement on Internal Trade to reduce or remove barriers to the movement of workers within Canada, making it easier for skilled workers to choose where to live and work
- enhancing the National Interprovincial Standards Red Seal Program for the trades, in partnership with the private sector

New Action

- encourage regulatory bodies to recognize workers who have obtained their qualifications in other countries

Objective 5: Improve Nova Scotia's competitive edge in attracting and retaining highly skilled international workers

Immigration must play a significant role in meeting strategic economic and social goals. Meeting these goals requires appropriate services and supports for the newcomer, including recognition of qualifications and efficient access to the labour market.

Highlights of Activities Underway

- attracting and retaining business immigrants and investors to the province through Nova Scotia's economic immigration programs
- attracting and retaining highly qualified international post-secondary education students to study in Nova Scotia through the International Marketing Program

New Actions

- explore policy and program responses to facilitate the recognition of credentials and skills for the internationally trained individuals living in Nova Scotia
- develop a pilot project for immigrants who wish to make the transition into post-secondary education, to provide the required English as a Second Language (ESL) programs for academic purposes
- explore opportunities under the Provincial Nominee Program to address skill shortages
- develop a working partnership between Apprenticeship Training and Metropolitan Immigrant Settlement Association (MISA) for the purpose of assessing and recognizing immigrant credentials related to apprenticeable trades
- facilitate new collaborative mechanisms for considering assessment of post-secondary credentials in universities, community colleges, and private career colleges
- retain a greater proportion of international students studying at Nova Scotia's post-secondary institutions

Objective 6: Design and implement a labour policy to promote safe and healthy work environments, fair employment standards, and stable labour-management relations

The work environment is significantly affected by governments' labour policy, which influences workplace factors including innovation, productivity, skill development, training, health and safety, working conditions, and equity issues. Regulatory bodies responsible for labour policy have a direct role to play in contributing to a positive labour climate.

Highlights of Activities Underway

- consulting stakeholders and the public to achieve best practices in regulatory management to ensure a fair and safe workplace
- encouraging industry-specific training, which has proven to be a successful way to reduce accident rates, through partnering with safety associations and labour in the construction, retail gasoline, trucking, and forestry industries to deliver training to employers and employees

- supporting the Safe Communities Foundation, which aims to mobilize the resources of communities to deal with all aspects of health and safety
- developing a core health and safety curriculum for high school students prior to entering the job market to try to reduce accidents amongst younger workers
- making first aid courses available to high school students to increase the number of people trained in first aid in Nova Scotia
- preparing various safety-related publications including *Farm Safety—Standards of Practice*, Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee, *Forest Professional*, and Workplace Hazard Material Information System booklets
- working with the Canadian Society of Safety Engineering on Project Minerva which is an initiative focussed on providing health and safety education in universities

New Actions

- develop a strategy to undertake a review of the Nova Scotia Labour Standards Code
- strengthen processes to support future development of a risk-based model for delivery of occupational health and safety inspection, monitoring, and compliance services
- increase activities in the prevention of occupational health and safety accidents and injury, the importance of which was identified in the province's response to the Nova Scotia Worker's Compensation Program, *A Focused Review* (Dorsey Report)
- disseminate relevant safety information to the fishing industry
- promote youth health and safety as part of a national initiative agreed to by Labour ministries from all Canadian jurisdictions
- partner with the Atlantic Centre of Excellence for Women's Health to investigate the relationship between women's health and well-being, family life, and earning a livelihood through the Healthy Balance Research Program

Objective 7: Improve opportunities for youth to develop the leadership skills required for successful labour market participation

Employers are looking for people who are responsible, positive, and adaptable and who can communicate, think critically, apply specialized knowledge, be lifelong learners and work in a team. Providing opportunities for youth to develop these skills through leadership activities must play a role in our labour force development strategies.

Highlights of Activities Underway

- adopting a youth engagement strategy prepared by the HeartWood organization for Rural Team Nova Scotia
- implementing the Canada–Nova Scotia Protocol on Youth Employment with the Federal–Provincial Youth Committee
- building on principles of youth capacity for leadership and community development such as the Nova Scotia Youth Conservation Corps, HeartWood, YouthLIVE and the Centre for Entrepreneurship Education and Development

New Actions

- analyse and nurture best practices in the youth leadership development field
- consult with community and government representatives to identify approaches to support youth leadership development and increase the opportunities available to youth
- explore policy and program options to support growth in this sector

Goal 2: Provide better labour market access and supports to Nova Scotians

For the Skills Nova Scotia Framework to be successful, it is necessary for the province to co-ordinate programs and services to support Nova Scotians in their career and employment choices. This includes career and employment guidance counselling, access to education and training, and the promotion of the principles of fairness, equity, and diversity.

Objective 1: Provide career- and employment-related services to Nova Scotians to help them develop their skills and find sustainable jobs

Many Nova Scotians need support to successfully make career and employment choices. Existing services must be better co-ordinated across the province to ensure continuous career supports. It is necessary to ensure equity of services for disadvantaged groups who consistently experience high levels of unemployment.

Highlights of Activities Underway

- offering career and job development services to income assistance recipients who are assessed as having the ability to participate in activities that improve their employability
- creating and implementing a professional development strategy to ensure that proper student assessment and referral practices are in place to enable adults to acquire the skills and credentials they need through the Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning
- providing recent post-secondary graduates with an opportunity to work with the Government of Nova Scotia and gain valuable experience for up to one year through a Career Starts Internship Program
- providing meaningful and applicable employment opportunities with the Government of Nova Scotia to post-secondary co-op students through the Cooperative Employment Program
- creating employment opportunities for Aboriginal students, racially visible students, students with disabilities, and female students pursuing studies in non-traditional areas through a Summer Employment Diversity Initiative and a mentorship program for females
- providing business start-up information to aspiring and existing entrepreneurs

New Actions

- initiate a service mapping project which will inventory current career development and employment services provided to Nova Scotians, identify gaps in service, and provide the foundation for a comprehensive career and employment strategy
- develop the concept of a single entry delivery access point for career advice for Nova Scotians
- provide education and training, career development and employment information to youth through the Youth Secretariat Web site
- support the continuation of Career Pathways from secondary schools to post-secondary education and feature employment by supporting the CollegePrep initiatives as outlined in the Memoranda of Understanding between school boards and Nova Scotia Community College

Objective 2: Assist low income Nova Scotians, including income assistance recipients, to access education and training

Access to education and training is essential for acquiring the knowledge and skills needed to achieve individual goals at home, at work, and in the community.

Highlights of Activities Underway

- developing work transition programs in areas of labour market demand and ensuring that there is a match between skills required and the needs of industry (for example, income assistance recipients who successfully completed essential skills education programs in the hotel industry are gaining employment in entry-level positions)
- providing eligible recipients of income assistance with sponsorship, in the form of full tuition, books, and fees, to attend one- and two-year core programs at the Nova Scotia Community College in order to gain the educational and technical skills necessary to enter the competitive labour market through the Equity Opportunities Program

New Action

- explore options for a new debt relief program that will reduce student loan debt for students with the highest need

Objective 3: Promote equity, fairness, and diversity throughout labour market programs and services offered in Nova Scotia

Through the Skills Nova Scotia Framework, we need to enhance the contributions of all Nova Scotians to seize emerging economic opportunities. Individuals who have significant barriers to employment often require additional support in order to make the transition to work.

Highlights of Activities Underway

- developing and implementing a recruitment initiative targeted at students with disabilities in the public education system to improve access to the Nova Scotia Community College and Nova Scotia universities
- developing and implementing an approach to meeting the exceptional needs of Individual Program Plan students from the public education system when they attend Nova Scotia Community College skills training programs
- developing and marketing Memoranda of Understanding with the Nova Scotia Community College and all universities in the province, with the goal of establishing a common provincial standard for goods and services delivery for any student with a disability attending post-secondary training and a common special needs policy for all post-secondary training institutes
- providing an Education Incentive Program for African Nova Scotian Students to assist and encourage their continued participation in high schools, community colleges, technical institutes, universities, and other approved post-secondary institutions
- continuing to support the Black Business Initiative's *Business is Jammin'* program to encourage youth entrepreneurship

The Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission commends the recognition of the importance of focusing on diversity and immigration in this forward-looking framework. We look forward to working with the Province in ensuring that diversity, under-represented groups, equity and inclusion remain integral parts of this initiative, throughout its implementation.

Mayann Francis
Human Rights Commission

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Human Rights Commission

- promoting women's education, training, and labour market activity, such as support for Techsploration, Hypatia, Association of Nova Scotia Women for Education and Research and Science, Women's Community Economic Development Network, especially in fields where women are under-represented
- recruiting and referring qualified designated group applications for employment competitions
- providing individual employment counselling to designated group applicants and government employees
- making presentations and conducting workshops on employment opportunities and job search techniques to community organizations
- conducting workshops and seminars for managers in the civil service to create awareness of both diversity management and the nature of the affirmative action policy, and their role in implementation
- reviewing employment policies and practices to ensure that any barriers to employment or advancement of persons from designated groups are eliminated
- ensuring that fair hiring practices are followed when filling positions within the Government of Nova Scotia through implementation of a fair hiring policy
- providing a workplace that is free of discrimination and promotes equality of opportunity to all persons accessing employment positions within the Government of Nova Scotia through implementation of an affirmative action policy
- recognizing the right of Government of Nova Scotia employees to work in an environment free of sexual harassment and any harassment based on the protected characteristics set out in the *Nova Scotia Human Rights Act* through implementing a sexual harassment and no discrimination policy
- prohibiting discrimination against Government of Nova Scotia employees, clients, or job applicants living with or affected by HIV or AIDS through implementation of a HIV/AIDS in the workplace policy
- ensuring reasonable steps are taken to provide services to persons who are deaf and hard-of-hearing in a fair and non-discriminatory manner through the provision of interpreter services and implementing a government sign language interpreter services policy

New Actions

- extend the Memorandum of Understanding framework between the Nova Scotia Community College and regional school boards to include First Nations' schools to support student success in post-secondary education
- establish an inter-governmental/inter-departmental and community-based Round Table on Women's Economic Security to identify and jointly work on issues affecting women's access to labour market programs and services

Objective 4: Develop and implement prior-learning assessment and recognition processes and tools

Prior learning assessment and recognition processes need to be developed to provide opportunities for people to receive credentials for skills and knowledge they already posess.

Highlights of Activities Underway

- recognizing work experiences and technical training through Prior Learning Assessment Recognition (PLAR) for the purpose of determining eligibility to write trade certification exams
- supporting the development of additional articulation agreements between post-secondary institutions whereby credits earned at one institution are recognized by another
- implementing policies through the Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning that recognize prior learning to fulfill some of the requirements of the Nova Scotia High School Graduation Diploma for Adults

New Action

- develop a credential assessment service to assess formal education of individuals educated in other countries who seek access to Nova Scotia's post-secondary institutions or the labour market

Goal 3: Strengthen Nova Scotia's system of lifelong learning opportunities

The continued development of a skilled and knowledgeable labour force will require the nurturing of a lifelong learning culture in Nova Scotia. In order to survive and thrive in the new global economy, Nova Scotians must adopt an attitude that learning is a lifelong endeavour that starts with birth and continues through adulthood. Encouraging positive attitudes toward learning will better prepare them for success in the future.

Objective 1: Increase the opportunities for Nova Scotia's children to develop a curiosity for and ability to learn before entering Nova Scotia's education system

Children who enter school ready to learn are more likely to be successful in school. Parents and other caregivers need to be equipped with the knowledge required to foster our children's learning ability and curiosity. Activities that support children's development now will better prepare them to succeed in the future.

Highlights of Activities Underway

- supporting parents and care givers as their children's first and most important teachers with *Read to Me!*, a province-wide initiative to give every newborn in the province a gift bag containing educational resources for the parents including age and culturally appropriate books
- funding the Family Literacy Initiative Endowment Fund, which provides grants to non-profit organizations to carry out family literacy projects in the province
- developing a comprehensive system of Early Childhood Development (ECD) in partnership with the federal government, which includes enhanced home visiting, quality child care, supports for children with special needs, parent education and support, and a variety of training strategies
- supporting story times and programs for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers where children and parents are introduced to age appropriate books and children develop a love of reading books and gain socialization skills

Objective 2: Improve the core skills of children in Nova Scotia's education system

Core skills are the foundation on which future labour market success will be built. Improving literacy, math, and science skills and knowledge will better prepare students for post-secondary education and training and employment. As well, *Learning for Life*, the plan for public education, emphasizes the importance of basics first, quality teaching, and testing for progress and accountability. Attention in these areas will help all students reach higher achievement in core skills.

Highlights of Activities Underway

- initiating *Writers in Action*, to improve grammar usage, spelling, and punctuation
- making early reading and writing the first priority by expanding early intervention programs, adding 700,000 books in grades primary to 7, and providing intensive, ongoing professional development
- increasing the amount of daily, uninterrupted time students spend on math, reading, and writing
- developing resources designed to enhance the French-language skills of children enrolled in the Acadian Education System who may have limited exposure to French at home
- sponsoring Techsploration, which introduces junior high school girls to scientific, technical, and trades work
- allowing students to discover the personal qualities, values, and attitudes of entrepreneurs through curriculum at all grade levels to learn specific knowledge and practically apply it in the creation of a venture

New Actions

- implement a comprehensive math strategy that will add new programs for struggling and advanced students; provide mathematics teacher leaders in every school; increase opportunities for teacher training/professional development; provide resources for teachers, students, and parents; and provide a framework for increased accountability for student learning and achievement
- measure student achievement through literacy and mathematics testing at grades 6, 9, and 12
- complete the implementation of the new Atlantic Canada Science curriculum for grades Primary-12, including the provision of equipment and other resources required for hands-on science learning
- launch French first-language resources for teachers and parents
- review and revise the career education components in elementary, junior high, and senior high curricula to include Career Portfolio
- plan pilot, resourcing, and professional development for implementation of Career Portfolio in grade 7
- monitor and continue to support the senior high portfolio project underway in partnership with Annapolis Valley Regional School Board, South Shore District School Board, and Nova Scotia Community College

Objective 3: Expand co-operative and work experience opportunities for students in Nova Scotia's secondary education system

Industry stakeholders have expressed that there is a need to better prepare Nova Scotia's secondary school students with skills and knowledge that will be relevant in tomorrow's labour market. Co-operative and work experience opportunities provide students with a chance to develop the skills and knowledge and gain the insights needed to help them make future career decisions.

Highlights of Activities Underway

- encouraging young people to consider entrepreneurship as a viable employment opportunity through the Youth Entrepreneurship Scholarships (YES) Program
- providing significant opportunities under the Community Access Program (C@P) for students to access entry-level work place opportunities throughout Nova Scotia
- continuing to support the development of entrepreneurial-skill based co-op programs
- continuing to support co-operative employment placements in not-for-profit organizations and within the public sector

New Actions

- work with education, industry, business, and sector councils to establish a Youth Apprenticeship Program and expand co-operative education and other community-based education programs to provide more high school students with experience in the workplace
- develop, pilot, and implement new courses that focus on labour market needs and opportunities, including interactive technology courses
- develop articulation agreements for a range of senior high courses and Nova Scotia Community College programs
- monitor and support regional school boards/Nova Scotia Community CollegePrep initiatives

In Nova Scotia, the transition to a more knowledge-intensive economy has led to an elevation in the basic requirements for successful participation in the labour market. The vast majority of new jobs require both sophisticated knowledge and skills as well as a capacity to be a lifelong learner. To prepare Nova Scotians for this reality, the NSCC constantly revises its program offerings to reflect areas of emerging opportunity. Therefore, we are greatly encouraged by the Province's Skills Nova Scotia Framework and 2002-2003 Action Plan *and we look forward to working collaboratively with them to help more Nova Scotians "learn a living."*

Ray Ivany
President, Nova Scotia Community College

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- continuing to support co-operative employment placements in not-for-profit organizations and within the public sector

New Actions

- work with education, industry, business, and sector councils to establish a Youth Apprenticeship Program and expand co-operative education and other community-based education programs to provide more high school students with experience in the workplace
- develop, pilot, and implement new courses that focus on labour market needs and opportunities, including interactive technology courses
- develop articulation agreements for a range of senior high courses and Nova Scotia Community College programs
- monitor and support regional school boards/Nova Scotia Community CollegePrep initiatives

In Nova Scotia, the transition to a more knowledge-intensive economy has led to an elevation in the basic requirements for successful participation in the labour market. The vast majority of new jobs require both sophisticated knowledge and skills as well as a capacity to be a lifelong learner. To prepare Nova Scotians for this reality, the NSCC constantly revises its program offerings to reflect areas of emerging opportunity. Therefore, we are greatly encouraged by the Province's Skills Nova Scotia Framework and 2002-2003 Action Plan *and we look forward to working collaboratively with them to help more Nova Scotians "learn a living."*

Ray Ivany
President, Nova Scotia Community College

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It is the skills, knowledge, and creativity of Nova Scotians that will lead to success in the future; literacy is the foundation upon which those skills are built. Any plans for skill development that do not include literacy will be doomed to failure.

Ann Marie Downie
Nova Scotia Provincial Literacy Coalition

Objective 4: Increase the opportunities for Nova Scotians to access adult basic education

More than half of Canada's workforce for the year 2015 is already in the labour market. All Nova Scotians must be able to access education and training in order to join the ranks of a skilled and knowledgeable labour force. This will require activities that provide working age Nova Scotians with opportunities to access upgrade education and access training.

Highlights of Activities Underway

- enhancing the relevance and accessibility of adult-centered programs ranging from basic literacy to the High School Graduation Diploma for Adults using the Nova Scotia School of Adult Learning as the co-ordinating mechanism
- delivering short-term programs such as the Woodlot Management Home Study Program that provides woodlot owners with the skills required to help them better manage their woodlots

New Actions

- implement a pilot literacy project to improve educational services for adults who are incarcerated or in conflict with the law
- develop resources to assist adult literacy organizations in serving the needs of seniors

Objective 5: Make education and training more relevant to the emerging skill needs of the learners and employers

Globalization, technology, new management methods, and information are rapidly changing the skill and knowledge requirements of the world of work. Traditional jobs are being constantly transformed and professionals with new combinations of skills are rapidly emerging. A more flexible education and training system will provide curricula to respond to these emerging skill needs.

Highlights of Activities Underway

- partnering with employers and labour through the Workplace Education Initiative to develop customized essential skills programs for workers
- establishing the Energy Training Program for Students to encourage the private sector to hire post-secondary students for summer and co-op work terms in the energy sector
- implementing the Nova Scotia Nursing Strategy, which provides funding for a co-operative learning experience for student nurses in the Dalhousie and St. Francis Xavier nursing programs
- reviewing and revising the Adult Learning Program curricula so that it is more closely aligned with employability skills required for work

New Actions

- enhance the Nova Scotia Community College's interactions with industry in program and curriculum development
- work with industry and educational institutions to design and develop training programs that meet industry skills demands, e.g., the Offshore Operations Technician Program at the Nova Scotia Community College

Objective 6: Increase the post-secondary education and training system's capacity to respond to emerging labour market needs

Skills shortages are being reported in the construction and health sectors and are predicted in the education and management professions. The creation of a skilled labour force positioned to satisfy the emerging skills shortages will require a more adaptive, responsive, and flexible education and training system. Collaboration among industry, government, and education and training providers will be a key component to Nova Scotia's success in responding to emerging labour market needs.

Nova Scotia universities support the Skills Nova Scotia framework through the significant role they play in the training of professionals and in the employment opportunities resulting from their research activities. Universities are widely connected with national and international practices and the private sector, all of which support Nova Scotia's particular labour market needs.

Council of Nova Scotia University Presidents

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Highlights of Activities Underway

- exploring the growth capacity of the Nova Scotia Community College
- providing network linkages to enhance the foundations of the digital economy and knowledge economy through the Information Economy Initiative, which includes providing enhanced high-speed access to university and community college Web sites
- expanding the baccalaureate nursing programs in Nova Scotia
- encouraging the continuation of university-based development centres that expose students and the community to entrepreneurship development activities and techniques

New Actions

- prepare business plan to address capacity requirements of apprenticeship to reach industry's expectations for training, delivery, and standards development
- integrate programming through the merger of Université Sainte-Anne and Collège de l'Acadie to provide increased opportunities for French post-secondary education
- support groups such as Hypatia in their work of improving the culture of educational institutions and workplaces to attract and retain women in science and trades and technology occupations
- create agricultural and aquacultural industrial research environments through partnerships with national and international academic institutions, other governments, and industry stakeholders (including recruitment of students from Europe, and participation in the Canada Research Chairs Program, Canada Foundation for Innovation Program, and Atlantic Innovation Fund)

Objective 7: Promote lifelong learning through the development of a learning culture

Change in the 21st century is occurring more rapidly and frequently than ever before. Encouraging lifelong learning will help Nova Scotians to effectively participate at home, at work, and in the community.

Highlights of Activities Underway

- supporting training opportunities in computer basics, software applications, and Internet use to help individuals upgrade their skills
- co-ordinating the annual Summer Reading Program to develop a love of books and reading and to maintain children's reading skills over the summer months
- providing rural residents with a level of access equitable to that enjoyed by urban residents through the Virtual Library
- keeping pace with governments' movement toward providing information and services on-line by supporting public libraries as key delivery points

New Actions

- support use of *Web-4-All* computer software in public libraries to increase learning opportunities for people with disabilities, new adult readers, and new immigrants
- encourage an interest in biology, archaeology, geology, palaeontology, culture, and heritage by providing a comprehensive schedule of Nova Scotia-specific exhibits and interpretive programs through the Nova Scotia Museum
- increase accessibility of provincial and community heritage resources and genealogy information available on-line through the Nova Scotia Museum and Public Archives to promote educational resources and opportunities for Nova Scotians
- promote the *Skills Nova Scotia Framework and 2002-2003 Action Plan*
- conduct public information sessions and presentations to encourage business and labour to invest in adult learning and skills training of their workforce
- showcase community and industry leadership through the provision of recognition events and awards

Conclusion

The Skills Nova Scotia Framework lays the foundation for the skills, supports, and systems necessary to achieve a world-class workforce ready to meet the challenges of today and the promise of tomorrow. This vision can be achieved only through the hard work and co-operation of all partners. Fortunately, Nova Scotians are adaptable and resourceful people, ready to meet the challenges of the rapidly changing economy.

The framework will help government respond to both the short- and long-term skill development needs of the labour market. Without delay, we must develop means to respond to economic opportunities as they arise, with skilled workers and the innovative thinking that will ensure a vibrant and strong Nova Scotia. Over the long term, we must ensure that our children arrive at the beginning of their education years with the foundations for learning firmly in place; our education systems must produce graduates with the tools necessary for today's workforce; and we must provide opportunities to learn across the life span, recognizing that learning isn't something you complete, but a way that you live.

With this framework, we need to build upon the strategies that will bring it to life. The key to success will be the partnerships that are forged to support the development of a skilled and knowledgable workforce. Nova Scotians validated the vision and goals of this framework and identified ways to move forward. We all have a role to play. Together, we will build a strong workforce and bright future.

Time Line

Spring 2003

Release of First Annual *Skills Nova Scotia Report*

An report on skills will be released in the late spring of each year. The report will detail our progress, allow us to make necessary adjustments and build a foundation for future directions.

Release of *2003–2004 Action Plan*

A government action plan will be released in the late spring of each year. It will build on existing actions and identify new opportunities to achieve our goals and objectives.

Endnotes

1. Canada. Advisory Council on Science and Technology, Expert Panel on Skills, *Stepping up: skills and opportunities in the knowledge economy*, ([Ottawa]: The Council, 2000).

2. Approximately 60 percent of Nova Scotians between the ages of 25 and 54 were either college, trade, or university graduates.
   Canada. Statistics Canada, *Labour Force Historical Review*, (n.p.: [Statistics Canada], 2001). CD-Rom.

3. In 1998–99, 42.3 percent of Nova Scotians aged 18 to 24 were enrolled in a full-time post-secondary program, as compared to 34.4 percent nationally. In 1997, 27.6 percent of Nova Scotians aged 16 or over, who were not attending an educational institution on a full-time basis, participated in some form of adult education, compared to 26.3 percent nationally.
   Canada. Statistics Canada, *Education in Canada, 2000*, (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 2001).

4. The province is home to 11 universities, two community colleges with a combined 18 campuses/learning centres, and 53 private career colleges.

5. NovaKnowledge, *Nova Scotia's Knowledge Economy Report Card 1999*, (Halifax: NovaKnowledge, 1999).

6. In 1999, NovaKnowledge checked the top four key quality of life indicators as identified by North American business leaders, and they found that Nova Scotia had favourable ratings in all four indicators (competitive cost of living, quality health care, good schools, and low crime rate) as compared to the rest of North America.
   Ibid.

7. Canada. Statistics Canada, *Population Projections for Canada, Provinces and Territories, 2000–2026*, (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 2001).

8. In fact, more than half of Canada's 2015 workforce is already in the labour market.
   Canada. Human Resources Development Canada. *Knowledge matters: skills and learning for Canadians*, ([Hull, Q.C.: Human Resources Development Canada], 2002).

9. Stephen A. Murphy, *What to do before the well runs dry: managing scarce skills*, (Ottawa: Conference Board of Canada, 2000); Conference Board of Canada, *Performance and Potential 2000-2001: seeking "made in Canada" solutions*, (Ottawa: Conference Board of Canada, 2001).

10. See note 1 above.

11. See source, note 8 above.

12. Mei Lin Harley, *Strengthening Rural Nova Scotia in the Knowledge-Based Economy*, (n.p.: Canadian Federation of Independent Business, 2001), [cited October 18, 2002]; www.cfib.ca/legis/novascot/index.asp.

13. Thirty-nine percent of Nova Scotians work in businesses with fewer than 20 employees.
See source, note 2 above.

14. By 2004, more than 70 percent of all new jobs created in Canada will require some form of post-secondary education, and 25 percent will require a university degree. Only 6 percent of new jobs will be held by those who have not finished high school.

Canada. Human Resources Development Canada, *Job Futures 2000, vol. 4, world of work: overviews and trends*, (Hull, Q.C.: Human Resources Development Canada, 2000).

15. In 2000–2001, 29.2 percent of Nova Scotians had activity limitations on a continuing basis (at least six months) because of a physical condition, mental condition or health problem as compared with 22.9 percent of Canadians.

Canada. Statistics Canada and Canadian Institute for Health Information. *Health Indicators*, (Ottawa: Minister of Industry and Canadian Institute for Health Information, 2002).

16. Approximately 22 percent of adult Nova Scotians between the ages of 25 and 54 had less than a high school diploma.

Canada. Council of Ministers of Education, *Education Indicators in Canada: report of the Pan-Canadian Education Indicators Program, 1999*, (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 2000) [cited June, 2002]; www.Statcan.ca:80/english/freepub/81-582-X1E/81-582-X1E.pdf.

17. Canada. National Literacy Secretariat, Statistics Canada, Human Resources Development Canada, *Reading the future: a portrait of literacy in Canada*, (Ottawa: National Literacy Secretariat, 1996).

18. Ibid.

19. See source, note 3 above.

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